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Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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able to roam over vast territories in the kingdom of science conquered and opened up by other men not rarely turns the weak heads of those who follow, and makes them, like lunatics at large, think themselves potentates when they are only tramps.

Great although science undoubtedly is, its greatness is not manifest as an instrument of educational discipline in our schools unless its deficiencies are supplemented and its dangers minimized by other means. If we were tied down to a choice between science and letters, in the name of all that is human and living and universal we should choose letters. Happily we are not tied down to such a choice, and we may safely make use of both if we employ as a necessary corrective to their separateness and their peculiar limitations those subjects by means of which alone we can shew their fundamental relations, those great organizers of our chaotic democracy of knowledge—the subjects which treat of the mind of man, of his knowing, feeling and acting, and of cause and purpose and meaning in the great whole of things.

(To be continued.)

HEALTH IN THE NURSERY.

BY FRANK GODFREY, ESQ., M.B.

(Continued from page 27.)

IN these days of keen competition there is an infinite danger of over-straining the young brain, and so doing irreparable harm, which no class honours however brilliant can recompense for. How often do we see the bright intelligent child pushed along in his mental work far beyond his powers simply because he *is* bright and quick, and because his proud parents and masters picture for him a brilliant future. Is that future generally attained? I fear only very seldom. Too often the lad who has given such early promise, and who has gone through a brilliant school career, envied by his class-mates and applauded by his teachers, fails in early manhood, his powers exhausted, his high promise unfulfilled and unattainable; while the boy of less brilliance, who has not been pushed, comes to the front later on in life, and develops mental powers with which no one would ever have credited him. Read that pathetic life history of a clever over-worked child by Marie Corelli, *The Mighty Atom*, and as you love your children protect them from brain strain.

It is easy enough to recognize the brilliant child, and it is generally equally easy to tell the stupid child, but I wish to enter a plea for many children who are supposed to be dull and inattentive, and who are so merely because of unrecognized deafness. We meet with many examples of this in practice, and I would wish that every apparently dull and inattentive child should not be condemned as such until it is made certain that his hearing is not at fault.

Of late years a new danger has crept into children's lives—I mean the danger of frequent excitement and interference with regular habits liable to be caused by children's parties. Far be it from me to decry or to discourage such a charming and pretty entertainment as a children's party, and I see nothing but good in it if not overdone. But there is a danger of these parties being overdone. They all come together with a rush, and they are many of them kept up too late. It cannot be good for any child to be kept in the state of excitement and unrest that frequent parties are bound to

produce, especially when these are associated with late hours and rich unaccustomed foods. We should be very careful not to allow our children to go to too many parties, and we should be equally careful that they are not allowed to be up much beyond their usual bedtime, or to eat a lot of unwholesome food. The remedy is in the hands of the givers of parties, who should aim at early hours and simple refreshment.

I have wandered, I fear, far from the subject of air, but a train of thought has led me on.

It is not necessary to say much on the subject of *sunshine*. We all know and appreciate its beneficent properties. It is required by all life, practically, for its exhilarating, cleansing, health-giving effects, and children require it in large measure. The nurseries should be, if possible, on the sunny side of the house, and children should be allowed out in the sunshine as much as possible. It is not very generally known that sunshine is a strong disinfectant and deodorizer. Many disease germs, which, like other malignant spirits, work in the dark, are rapidly killed by exposure to sunlight. This was conclusively proved by some experiments made in America with infected bedding from the berths of a cholera-stricken liner during the Hamburg cholera outbreak. Hence we may realize the importance of admitting sunshine freely and unstintingly to the bedding and furniture in our homes. We all know, too, how potent an effect sunshine has on the spirits and temperament, evidenced by the gay, light-hearted disposition of the inhabitants of Southern Europe as contrasted with those of our less favoured northern latitudes.

Warmth is most essential to the child and *must* be secured if the child is to be kept well and to grow up to health. Children very readily part with heat and suffer from the lack of it very seriously. Warmth may be obtained by artificial heat, by exercise, by clothing, and by food (which I have already spoken about).

As regards artificial heat, an open fire is much to be preferred to any closed stove or other method of heating. The room is brighter and fresher, and I think healthier, and we should always adopt this method in our nurseries. A fire, too, serves a valuable part in ventilation, though it does, perhaps, tend to increase draught. The nurseries should above all things be warm, as well as airy and dry, and we should never hesitate to light a fire whenever the weather is

cold enough or damp enough to require it. Temperature should be the guide, not the almanack. Nothing strikes one as more senseless than to see a fireplace arranged with pretty curled papers or some fancy screen, put there in May and never to be moved till October. There are many days in summer, in this climate, when both we and our children would be all the better for a good fire. It is sad when we allow common sense to be subordinated to fashion.

Children should have abundance of *exercise*, and preferably in the open air. They need it, and it is natural to them. Watch a baby or a child when awake, the creature is hardly ever still; indeed, if we adults went through the same amount of exercise as a healthy child does in half an hour we would feel as if we had been on the treadmill. In childhood energy is given off very rapidly, and tissue change is great, and exercise is the natural outcome of these. Exercise, too, produces warmth, and a healthier warmth than any produced by artificial means. A scamper round the garden, or a run with a hoop, will remove blue fingers and a peaky face quicker and better than any fire. When the weather is too bad to allow of their being out of doors our children should be turned, if possible, into a large room to dance and romp about.

One is frequently asked for advice about cycling for children, and it certainly is an important question. Although the wild craze for cycling has passed, the cycle has "come to stay," and has taken a permanent place amongst us as a vehicle of recreation and of utility. Everybody cycles, and thousands of children, and it is well that all should know what, if any, danger attends the exercise. The danger of cycling is the danger of strain to the heart and blood-vascular system, and it is a danger that comparatively few appreciate. Now the young heart is an organ very liable to yield to strain, and one in which prolonged and oft repeated strain is likely to cause organic disease; and I believe that you may have greater strain thrown on the heart by cycling, with less apparent evidence of it as manifested by breathlessness, than by any other form of exercise. It is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules; but speaking generally I should say that no child under nine years of age should be allowed on a machine at all, that long distances and riding uphill should be strictly avoided, and all racing prohibited.

And now I come to a very important matter, namely *clothing*. We have most of us some fads about clothing. Some go to one extreme, some to another; some advocate an absurd amount of smothering up, others would, as they call it, "harden" their children by clothing them too thinly. We want to steer between these two extremes, and to do this we need only remember that children must be warm, and that they must have freedom of movement to allow of their getting the exercise they require. Any clothing which interferes with free movement is harmful, no matter how warm its texture; all clothing which allows the skin to be chilled must be avoided.

It must be remembered that the skin is not merely a kind of leathery covering to the body, as some would suppose. It is an *organ*, and a very important organ, in which a vast amount of blood is constantly circulating. The skin is the great heat regulator of the body, the blood comes to the skin to get rid of its heat, or in other words to be cooled. You can readily understand that in the skin the blood can be cooled too much, or in other words that it may be chilled, and then return to the important internal organs, cold and devitalized, to injure them and to set up some serious disorder. And further it is essential that the blood should circulate freely in the skin, and to enable it to do this the blood vessels in the skin must be freely open, not narrowed and contracted. Now cold, as you all know from personal experience, contracts and shrivels up the skin, and with it the blood vessels that exist in it. When this happens less blood is able to circulate in the skin, and as a result the lungs, liver, and other internal organs are over-gorged and hampered in their work. If this chilling be a sudden occurrence it may set up an active internal inflammation; but if the skin be kept constantly a little too cold, the blood is kept below its proper temperature, it suffers, as do all the other organs to which it carries life. How then are we to arrange to keep the skin and blood warm? By clothing the whole of the surface of the body, save the head and hands in warm woollen clothing, equally distributed. It is useless to smother up the chest and stomach in many vests, binders, and petticoats, whilst the legs and arms are left bare or but thinly clad in calico or linen. Try to imagine how large a sheet of skin is represented by that covering limbs and you will realize how

large a proportion of blood must be chilled if these be not kept warm. Children's clothing must be light, it must be warm, and it must be easily fitting; and I am convinced that suitable warmth can only be obtained in animal wool. The various descriptions of cotton underclothing, though superior to linen, are *not* so warm as those made from wool, and no amount of puffing and advertisement by their manufacturers will make them so. Woollen clothing, of suitable texture, is the proper clothing for children, and it is as porous as need be. In summer we may, perhaps, put them into cotton or linen, but to be quite safe it is better to keep to wool of thinner texture.

In babyhood we should avoid all the senseless inelastic binders and stays which it is the fashion to use, and which have been used for past generations. I have preached against them till I am tired of it; all I ever get for my trouble is a look of pity from the nurse, and a lofty remark that she never saw a decent baby dressed in any other way. A baby's stomach moves up and down with every breath, and it distends and contracts according as it is full or empty. It cannot therefore be right to put round that stomach an inelastic binder, for in the one case it must injuriously compress the full stomach, and in the other it must be so loose as to be useless. A binder is necessary in early infancy to prevent rupture of the navel, but it should be made of some warm elastic material, so as to allow of the movements of the stomach whilst maintaining a constant gentle pressure. Over the binder should be put a little knitted woollen shirt, then a flannel skirt or petticoat which clasps at the wrists and extends below the feet, a linen petticoat next, and over all the gown. This last should not be too long, and should be so arranged that the baby can kick its legs about freely, and it also should have sleeves reaching to and clasping round the wrists. On the feet should be easily-fitting knitted wool socks. When the baby is shortened the same style of clothing may be worn, only with the gown and petticoat shortened, and the binder may be discarded. It is not required now, and it, like stays, will do harm by hampering movement. It is generally thought that stays are required to support a baby's back; this is a fallacy, the back is far better left alone to develop naturally. It should not be fixed up in a splint any more than should the limbs.

And, talking of shortening, this process as often carried out

is fraught with danger. It is the custom, at all events in certain classes of society, to shorten the baby at a certain age—three months, I think, is the accepted time—by making a great change suddenly in its apparel. The long swaddling clothes, the woollen sleeves and socks, are discarded, and the baby is served up to its admiring relatives in a short linen frock, without sleeves, and with pretty coloured bows at the shoulders, with bare neck, bare legs, pretty cotton socks, and dainty shoes. All very sweet and charming, and possibly to be undertaken without great risk in the middle of a hot summer. But think what this means in winter, how great, how sudden the change, and how perilous. I well remember being sent for to see a fine healthy child (whose mother I had specially warned on the subject), the day after it had been shortened for Christmas. The flushed face, the dry skin, the restlessness, and hurried breathing proclaimed only too surely what had happened, and that young life succumbed to pneumonia, a victim to ignorance and to a foolish custom.

When babyhood is past and during childhood the clothing should be equally warm, simple, and free; a knitted wool vest, a woollen combination with long sleeves, a flannel petticoat of the "rational" type, that is—made like a combination, only with loosely-fitting knickerbockers fastening over and meeting a woollen stocking at the knee; and over this any dress you like. And in summer the same, only with petticoat of thinner material and possibly with the combination of cellular cloth or soft cotton. So clothed, the child is safe from all ordinary sources of cold, and the skin is kept equally warm.

I cannot too strongly condemn the pernicious and utterly erroneous idea that children can be hardened by clothing them thinly and exposing them to all weathers. One would think that no educated parent could be so foolish; and yet this idea does exist, as one has had occasion to see.

Some few years back I was asked to see a little girl of six, the child of wealthy parents. Her mother explained that the child was constantly ailing, looked thin and delicate, and required frequent medical care. It was a chill evening in October, and I found a frail half-starved-looking child, pinched and feeble, dressed in a charmingly pretty thin silk dress, with bare throat, bare arms, bare legs, and without one vestige of wool about it save a very thin undervest.

Except for a warmer dress, and a jacket, this was the same clothing she had been wearing out of doors during the day. On remonstrating with the mother, and pointing out that want of warm clothing was the cause of the child's ill-health, I was met with an indignant statement that the clothing was ample, and that the mother believed in hardening her children, not coddling them; and my warnings were ignored. And one sees numerous cases such as this, though, perhaps, not so extreme, where ignorance or wrong-headed ideas of hardening are responsible for setting a hopeless blight on young, and what should have been healthy lives. Is it not too sad? Children's boots and shoes should be made free and easy to fit the individual feet; the foot must not be forced into a boot which cramps and compresses it.

Children need of course to be protected from rigorous weather, but we need not fear to send them out in cold weather provided they are properly clad. Soft cloth gaiters will protect the legs, and a warm cloak, warmed at the fire before being put on, will effectually prevent any danger of chill. Similarly for a baby, it too may safely be sent out in its pram if it be well wrapped up in a warm rug, and if the pram itself be warmed by facing it to the fire, or by heating it with a hot-water bottle.

Perhaps some of you may smile at these precautions, and think that they savour of coddling. It is not coddling at all, and I abhor real coddling as much as any of you. There is a good and sound reason for thus warming the out-of-door garments which any of you can test personally. If you put on a cold cloak, what happens? There is a rush of animal heat from your body into the cloak, and if you go out at once into a keen frosty air or chill east wind you are *parting* with heat just at the very time you most need to retain it. You lose heat which you may never regain till you return to a warm room, or take some violent exercise. Whereas by putting on a warmed cloak this loss of heat is avoided, and you remain cosy, warm, and comfortable during your outing. If any one doubts this I would only say, try the experiment, and he will doubt no longer. Similarly with the bed. How cold the sheets strike us when we get into them on a winter's night, how long it is before we feel warm, how often do our feet remain cold all the night through. By warming the bed, and nothing is better for this purpose

than the old-fashioned warming pan, all this discomfort may be prevented. In winter I hold that our children's beds should always be warmed, and there should be a fire in the night nursery. A flannel nightdress is the proper garment. If these precautions against cold are necessary in health, how much more necessary are they after illness, or in inherited delicacy. We are careful enough during and after severe illness, but it is my common experience to meet with lamentable want of care after slight ailments.

The common cold is often changed into a severe bronchitis or pneumonia by want of care. Those two diseases, which are popularly regarded as simple, measles and whooping cough, are very often the predisposing causes of grave lung trouble. It is a common thing to hear that children have "only" got the measles; it is common to hear of children with whooping cough being sent out in the depths of winter to breathe the air at the gas works, or the fumes from the lime kilns, in the belief that these agents will cure them. Some coal tar products are, I admit, excellent remedies for whooping cough, but they should not be administered out of doors on a winter's day. Measles and whooping cough are often in themselves but simple complaints, requiring nothing more than bed for a few days, warmth and care, but these they *must* have. No diseases are so liable to grave complications, and though the doctor may not often be required for their treatment, he may be very badly needed for their results if care be not taken.

A well-known proverb says that "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," and we must be scrupulously clean in our nurseries, and in our children's persons and food. The nurseries should be well scrubbed once or twice a week; all dust carefully removed daily, cooking utensils, cups, plates, &c., most thoroughly cleansed after use, and bed and body clothes changed sufficiently often. Children should be fully bathed every evening before going to bed in warm water, and washed in warm water every morning. Cold baths are not permissible, except to very robust children in summer. Soap should be of good quality, and what is known as over-fatted, that is with a minimum amount of alkali. Sea-bathing, on this east coast at all events, is, I think, not safely to be undertaken, except in the height of summer; and prolonged paddling, especially when the wind is cold, is dangerous.

Probably the keynote of success in the management of children is *Regularity*—regularity in rising and in going to bed, regularity in meals, regularity in all things. And remember, too, that children require a sufficiency of *rest*. The day is too long for the young child, and up to seven or eight years of age a child should be put to bed for an hour at least at about mid-day.

So far I have spoken of physical health. Will I be going beyond my subject, or boring you, if I speak for a moment of *Moral Health*? By this I do not mean religious training, on which subject others are better qualified to speak, but I mean the healthy moral tone that should prevail in the nursery; I mean obedience, discipline, cheerfulness. Our children must be and should be happy; they cannot be happy if we spoil them, nor can we. Children are quick to take impressions, they are creatures of habit; they very soon learn where, how, and from whom, they can get their own way. They like getting their own way (we all do), but they must not have it. A spoilt child is an abomination, and its parents most blameworthy. If they would only see it, they are doing their child an irreparable wrong by spoiling it, they are really treating it cruelly, though they fancy they are kind; they are training it up in habits which will swamp its better nature and perhaps wreck its future.

The training cannot be begun too early. The infant who gets the bottle, or is lifted from its crib, every time it cries, develops into the child who screams the house down until it gets the toy it wants, who is a plague to its parents, a terror to its nurse, and a nuisance to everybody, and who passes from an odious boy into a selfish, wilful man. Such words as "won't" and "shan't" should never be heard in the nursery. The parent's word must be law, which the child obeys cheerfully and of course; there must be no curbing of spirits, and the desired result may be readily attained without harshness, without punishment, without any tears, if the training be only begun early enough, and if it be systematically adhered to. The child then obeys, not because it is afraid to disobey, but because it does not know what disobedience is. To the child so trained, punishments will be almost unknown, frowns and tears will be but seldom seen, and its young life will be, as it should be, *bright and happy*.